

Dyadic Consensus and Satisfaction of Married and Dating Couples in Malaysia

Cai-Lian Tam (Corresponding author)

Jeffery Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Monash University Sunway Campus, Malaysia

E-mail: tam.cai.lian@med.monash.edu.my

Teck-Heang Lee

Taylor's Business School, Taylor's University, Malaysia

E-mail: teckheanglee_2000@yahoo.com

Wai-Mun Har

Faculty of Accountancy & Management, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia

E-mail: harwn@mail.utar.edu.my

Soo-Imm Chua

Department of Psychology, School of Health and Natural Sciences

Sunway University College, Malaysia

Received: February 17, 2011 Accepted: March 23, 2011 doi:10.5539/ass.v7n9p65

Abstract

In recent years, central research on relationships has focused mostly on the quality of relationships. It has been postulated that married and dating couples tend to rate the quality of their relationship differently. The present study aims to explore this statement in addition to examining the role of gender in couple satisfaction and consensus. A total of 160 participants that were made up of 80 married individuals and 80 individuals who were dating were surveyed for this purpose. The Dyadic Consensus and Dyadic Satisfaction subscale from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale were administered to the couples. Independent-samples T-test was used to analyse the gender differences in regards to dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction. It was found that there was a significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. However, it was found that there was no significant difference between married and dating couples in relate to dyadic consensus in a relationship. In addition, findings of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in satisfaction and consensus among males and females. Further investigation is recommended on couple's problem-solving styles which may lead to noticeable differences between genders, married and dating couples as relate to their level of satisfaction and consensus.

Keywords: Dyadic satisfaction, Dyadic consensus, Married and dating couples, Malaysia

1. Introduction

The development and maintenance of relationships between couples have always served as a fascinating topic. In psychology, dyadic consensus and satisfaction were frequently functioned as the tool for global relationship measure. Halford and Markman (1997) suggested that relationship success is strongly correlated with satisfaction and consensus. Malaysian Islam Development Department (JAKIM, 2008) reported that there was a drastic increase in the divorce rates in Malaysia. For example, there were 131 086 marriages against 20 259 divorces in the year of 2007. The high divorce rate revealed that the Malaysian couples should emphasize the

promotion of successful relationship. The occurrence of separation and divorce usually followed the periods of decline in the level of relationship satisfaction (Gottman, 1993).

In recent years, central research on this topic has focused mostly on the quality of relationships. Spanier (1976), a prominent figure in such studies, have argued that the quality of couple relationships can be measured through exploring the degree of consensus, satisfaction, cohesion and affection in a relationship. As continuous efforts are being placed into examining the concept, researchers such as Kamey and Bradbury (1995) have further divided couples in romantic relationships into different categories: married couples, cohabitating couples, dating couples, homosexual couples and many more. It has been postulated that couples from different categories tend to rate the quality of their relationship differently. For some couples, the level of satisfaction and consensus remains constant or even lower over time. Karney and Bradbury (1995) further explained that such relationship down trend among couples may lead the couples to become stressful and emotionally divorced.

General trends in the existing literature show that married couples were more satisfied and committed in their relationship. However, the link between relationship status and dyadic consensus wasn't as pronounce in their studies. For example, in terms of gender differences, it has been noted that satisfaction and consensus level of males and females differ because it relies heavily on their perception of what contributes to these two relationship factors (Sprecher 1988; Rusbult 1983 as cited in Floyd & Wasner, 1994). Thus, this study is conducted in hope to shed light on these aspects.

The findings in this study may also be advantageous to facilitate alternative and more constructive approaches for both appraisal of behaviours and healthy interactions in a relationship. On the other hand, intervention programmes can be specifically designed to assist individuals to recognise perceived discrepancies in relationship events and how their appraisal processes are associated to consensus and satisfaction in a relationship.

Moreover, this study appears to be one of the relatively few pioneer studies in Malaysia that sought to compare and contrast cultural factors and its effect on relationships. Although our sample size may not be representative of a national sample, results from the study are still indicative of trends in couples in our society. Research grounds can be expanded with the help of our current findings and future studies can be done to examine these trends.

1.1 Definitions of dyadic satisfaction and dyadic consensus

Before further discussion, the definitions of dyadic satisfaction and dyadic consensus are first examined. The two dimensions of relationship quality presented in this study are Dyadic Consensus and Dyadic Satisfaction; both components are derived from DAS (Dyadic Adjustment Scale). Dyadic Consensus concerns the degree of harmonious accord between partners on matters of importance to the dyadic functioning of the relationship (Kurdek, 1992). Kurdek suggested that dyadic consensus consists of high frequency of agreement between partners. Furthermore, he also specified that dyadic satisfaction can be measured through low instances of quarrels, discussions of separation, and negative interactions. Miller and Salkind (2002) further elaborated dyadic consensus as "The degree to which the couple agree on matters of importance to the relationship" (p. 546).

On the other hand, Dyadic Satisfaction is characterised as the extent of appreciation and strain in the relationship as well as the prevalence with which each partner has completed the disintegration of the relationship (Spanier, 1976). However, Miller and Salkind (2002) elaborated dyadic satisfaction as "The degree to which the couple is satisfied with the present state of the relationship and is committed to its continuance" (p. 546).

As a conclusion, in this study, dyadic consensus is defined as frequent agreement between couples on matters of importance to their relationship whereas, dyadic satisfaction is defined as the level of satisfaction experienced by couples that influence their commitment in a relationship.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Satisfaction and consensus in regards to married and dating couples

Although limited research has been done in this area, there are several notable studies that have attempted to compare and contrast couple satisfaction and consensus between married and dating couples. In an existing study of undergraduate couples, it was found that among the 44 dating and 64 married couples, dating individuals reported more facilitative communication behaviours and more companionship activities than married couples, which is believed to be an indication of higher consensus and satisfaction in a relationship (Assh & Byers, 1990). This finding is also accentuated in Jacobson and Margolin's (1979 as cited in Assh & Byers, 1990) study as their

study indicated that high levels of reciprocated favourable behaviours elicited in the early impressionable stage of the relationship may lead to idealised conceptualisations of the partner.

On the other hand, Gonzaga, Campos and Bradbury's (2007) research on 66 heterosexual dating couples and 172 married couples suggested that, couples who were similar in terms of emotion and personality experience higher relationship quality, regardless if they're married or dating. Another study by Floyd and Wasner (1994) proposed that relationship satisfaction is predictive of commitment and that married couples were more committed. In order to support their theory, they mentioned that Sprecher's study in 1988 (as cited in Floyd & Wasner, 1994) stated social issues and other constraints that would terminate a relationship were significantly stronger in premarital couples than in married couples.

In addition, Christensen, Sullaway and King (1983 cited in Assh, & Byers, 1990) proposed that couples tend to use positive dispositional attributions to mould and preserve a set of facilitative perceptions of their partner during the initial stages of the relationship. In the same vein, Margolin, Talovic and Weinstein (1983) found that as romantic relationships evolve from the dating stage to matrimonial ties, undesirable behavioural attributes became imperceptibly in their partners.

Furthermore, Rusbult's (as cited in Floyd & Wasner, 1994) investment model in 1983 showed that investments in the relationship after a marriage were harder to replace compared to new formed relationships. Hence, most studies have indicated that there are notable fundamental differences between married and dating couples when it comes to level of satisfaction and consensus in a relationship.

2.2 Gender differences on couple satisfaction and consensus

In terms of gender, level of satisfaction and consensus in a relationship is postulated to be rated differently between males and females due to different interests. Furman and Simon (2006) put forward the notion that males may have less of a foundation to serve as a basis for their expectations and representations of romantic relationships as the nature of their cordial relationships are largely distinguished by less intimate disclosure.

Furman and Simon (2006) posited that females tend to ruminate about relationships and may be more sensitive to the quality of the relationship. Various authors as cited in Fiese and Tomcho (2001) such as Acitelli (1992), Fincham, Beach, Harold and Osborne (1997) and Gottman (1994) shared similar findings and suggested that females are more relationship oriented as compared to males as they voluntarily undertake the responsibility of maintaining the well-being of their romantic relationships.

In Davis and Oathout's (1987) study that included 264 heterosexual student couples where 29 were reported to be married, the largest predictor of female satisfaction is good communication skills. A research done on 71 married and cohabitating student couples also indicated that for men, happiness in a relationship is strongly influenced by the degree of their financial security (MacLean & Peters, 1995).

In addition, Floyd and Wasner's (1994) findings on 530 college student couples suggested that men choose to remain in a relationship even if there were numerous alternatives (partner options) because they have purposefully selected their current partner from a pool of available partners where as women choose to remain committed because they believe that the quality of their alternatives are less favourable compared to men. Taking all research evidences into consideration, we can conclude that there are differences between males and females in terms of perceived relationship satisfaction and consensus.

In summary, this study predicts that the relational consensus and satisfaction between partners would reflect the multidimensionality of intimate relationships and their essentially interactive nature. Subsequently, this research was undertaken to explore the dyadic effects of consensus and satisfaction which may differ in accordance to gender differences.

3. Hypotheses

This present study aims to investigate if there is a significant difference in the level of dyadic satisfaction and dyadic consensus between married and dating couples and also between males and females. The hypotheses of the study are formulated as below.

Hypothesis 1: There is significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship; where dating couples would have a higher level of dyadic consensus.

Hypothesis 2: There is significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship; where dating couples would have a higher level of dyadic satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: There is significant difference between males and females in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship; where females would have a higher level of dyadic consensus.

Hypothesis 4: There is significant difference between males and females in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship; where females would have a higher level of dyadic satisfaction.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

The questionnaires were distributed through convenience sampling to participants who volunteered to participate in the survey. Firstly, non-probabilistic sampling was adopted. At the initial stage, there were 200 participants involved in the survey. In order to get the equal number for gender, married and dating couples, stratified sampling and quota were applied. Finally the sample consisted of 160 participants that were made up of 80 married individuals and 80 dating individuals. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 42 years and above with 20 (12.5%) of the participants fitting in the age range from 18 to 22 years, 56 (35.0%) of the participants fitting in the age range from 23 to 27 years, 20 (12.5%) of the participants fitting in the age range from 28 to 32 years, 9 (5.6%) of the participants fitting in the age range from 33 to 37 years, 11 (6.9%) of the participants fitting in the age range from 38 to 42 years, and 44 (27.5%) of the participants fitting in the age range of 42 years and above.

A total number of 80 (50%) male and 80 (50%) female participants were surveyed for the research. There were 22 (13.7%) Malay participants, 126 (78.8%) Chinese participants, 8 (5.0%) Indian participants and the remaining 4 (2.5%) participants were of other races. Among the 160 participants, 22 (13.8%) were Muslims, 78 (48.8%) were Buddhists, 4 (2.5%) were Hindus, 23 (14.4%) were Christians, 31 (19.4%) had no religion while the remaining 2 (1.3%) participants were of other religions.

In terms of the participants' highest education qualification, 11 (6.8%) participants reported to be at a Pre-University/equivalent level, 42 (26.3%) participants reported to be at a Diploma/equivalent level, 84 (52.5%) participants reported to be at a Degree/equivalent level, and 23 (14.4%) reported to have other qualifications.

4.2 Instruments

4.2.1 Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) designed by Spanier (1976) is used to measure the quality of relationship in married or cohabitating couples and has an overall reliability of .96 as well as a validity of .86. The DAS was chosen for this study because it has been previously adapted by various studies to measure relationship quality in dating couples (Troy, 2000; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988). It has four sub scales: Dyadic Consensus, Affectionate Expression, Dyadic Satisfaction and Dyadic Cohesion, and is a self-administered 32 item self-report scale. However, this study only aims to measure the degree of consensus and satisfaction in couples, thus, Dyadic Consensus and Dyadic Satisfaction were the only subscales used in this study.

The Dyadic Consensus domain comprises 13 items and has a reliability of .90. Participants are given 6 statements to choose from and each statement is assigned a response format (i.e., Strongly Agree = 1, Always Agree = 2, Occasionally Agree = 3, Occasionally, Disagree = 4, Always Disagree = 5, Strongly Disagree = 6). Participants are required to choose only one answer. Higher score in this subscale indicates greater level of disagreements where as lower score indicates better consensus.

On the other hand, the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale has 10 items and has a reliability of .94. From item C1 to C7, participants are given 6 statements to choose from and each statement is assigned a number (i.e., All the time = 1, Most of the time = 2, Frequently = 3, Occasionally = 4, Rarely = 5, Never = 6). For item C8, participants had to rate from 1 to 5, where as for item C9, participants had to rate from 1 to 7 and lastly for item C10, participants had to choose a statement that is assigned a number from 0 to 5. Participants are required to choose only one answer for each question. Higher score in this subscale denotes greater satisfaction and lower score denotes less satisfaction.

4.3 Procedure

A single questionnaire was used to obtain information from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 3 sections that measures different dimensions; Part A: Demographic, Part B: Dyadic Consensus, and Part C: Dyadic Satisfaction. Participants were required to read the questions themselves and note down their answers on questionnaire. Most of the participants answered the questions and returned the questionnaire on the spot. However, time allowance was also given to participants who wished to take home the questionnaire and resubmit it a few days later. Seven research-assistants helped in the administration of the questionnaire by approaching participants who were willing to participate.

Participants were acquainted with the purpose of the study and the length and nature of their participation. Participants were required to fill in consent forms which were non-obligatory. With the intention to protect the participants' confidentiality, they were assured that no efforts will be contracted to discover the participants and the answers. Participants were instructed to answer honestly and they were reassured that there were no wrong answers. Before the questionnaires were distributed among the participants, they were notified that they were allowed to withdraw from partaking in the survey without prior notification if they feel discomfited towards their involvement in the study.

5. Results

Independent-samples T-test was performed to substantiate the hypotheses put forward in this study. A T-test analysis was carried out to ascertain the possible gender differences in regards to dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction of individuals towards their marital or romantic relationships. Supplementary to this, another T-test analysis was conducted to distinguish the possible differences for married and dating couples in relation to their dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction concerning their relationships.

5.1 Group Comparisons

5.1.1 T-Test

Mean differences between married and dating couples on measures of dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction variables were assessed. This did not reveal a significant effect on dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. The dyadic consensus mean for married couples was 31.14 and dating couples was 31.36 [$t(158) = -0.139, p > .05$]. The dyadic satisfaction mean for married couples was 42.49 and dating couples was 44.00 [$t(158) = -1.812, p < .01$]. Thus, there was no significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship. However, there was significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. See Table 1.

Insert Table 1

Mean differences between males and females on measures of dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction variables were assessed. Result revealed no significant difference on dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. The dyadic consensus mean for males was 31.83 and females was 30.67 [$t(158) = .713, p > .05$]. The dyadic satisfaction mean for males was 43.40 and females was 43.09 [$t(158) = .371, p > .05$]. Hence, there's no significant difference between males and females in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship. It was also found that there was no significant difference between males and females in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. See Table 2.

Insert Table 2

6. Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine if there was a significant difference between married and dating couples in terms of relationship quality indicators such as dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction. Additionally, this study also sought to explore if there's a difference between males and females when it came to dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction in a relationship. Our study revealed significant difference between married and dating couples relation to satisfaction in a relationship. However, results of the study yielded insignificant differences in other hypotheses. Thus, showing that there's no significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship. Moreover, it was also concluded that there's no significant difference between males and females in terms of dyadic consensus and dyadic satisfaction in a relationship.

6.1 Satisfaction and consensus in regards to married and dating couples

Firstly, results of study proved that our second hypothesis was accepted where it was predicted that there was a significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic satisfaction. This runs in -congruent with an existing study of undergraduate couples, where it was found that among the 44 dating and 64 married couples, married couples were less willing to engage in companionship activities compared to dating couples, which was believed to be an indication of lower satisfaction in a relationship (Assh & Byers, 1990).

Married couples were less agreeable to engage in the same activity compared with couples who were in a relationship. The finding of our result supported Jacobson and Margolin's (1979 cited in Assh & Byers, 1990) study as their study indicated that high levels of reciprocated favourable behaviours elicited in the early impressionable stage of the relationship may lead to idealised conceptualisations of the partner.

In addition, Christensen, Sullaway and King (1983 cited in Assh & Byers, 1990) proposed that couples tend to use positive dispositional attributions to mould and preserve a set of facilitative perceptions of their partner during the initial stages of the relationship. This would be plausible explanation for the contributing factors to satisfaction that was not examined in this study. A more significant difference between groups may be detected if these individual variables were examined as a mean to measure satisfaction. In conclusion, in this study, it was found that there's significant difference between married and dating couples in terms of dyadic satisfaction in a relationship.

Next, it was hypothesized that there is significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship. However, results refuted the hypothesis. In comparison with our findings, Floyd and Wasner (1994) actually predicted relationship consensus to be more salient in married couples. On the other hand, Assh and Byers (1990) studied 44 dating and 64 married undergraduate couples and pointed out that couples who were dating actually engaged in more facilitative communication which may be predictive of higher consensus. However, in this study, no significant difference was found between the two groups when it came to consensus in a relationship.

Gonzaga, Campos and Bradburry's (2007) research on 66 heterosexual dating couples and 172 married couples suggested that, couples who were similar in terms of emotion and personality experienced higher relationship quality, regardless if they're married or dating. This explanation may be applied to explain our findings. Perhaps most of the couples recruited shared similarities in their personality, thus it was difficult to pinpoint a difference between married and dating couples when it came to consensus.

In summary, since the studies on the dyadic effects of consensus and satisfaction between married and dating couples have been relatively far few in between, this study has contributed to the literature on the multifaceted dyadic experience of intimate relationship in several important ways

6.2 Gender differences on couple satisfaction and consensus

In this study, it was also hypothesized that there is significant difference between males and females in regards to dyadic consensus in a relationship. Our results proved otherwise. Again, the lack of research in this field makes it difficult to compare the present findings with the existing studies. It is possible that no significant differences were found because other variables that may have contributed to this factor was not measured in this study. In support of this notion, it is believed that a significant difference may emerge if these variables were examined individually to represent dyadic consensus in couples instead of measuring a general concept like dyadic consensus. Hence, it was concluded that no significant difference exists between males and females in regards to couple consensus.

Lastly, the hypothesis that significant difference exists between males and females in regards to dyadic satisfaction in a relationship was also refuted by our results. In contrary, MacLean and Peters (1995) study on 71 married and cohabitating student couples showed that for men, happiness in a relationship is strongly influenced by the degree of their financial security. Moreover, in Davis and Oathout's (1987) study that included 264 heterosexual student couples where 29 were reported to be married, they decided that the largest predictor of female satisfaction is good communication skills.

Our results have failed to detect these differences between males and females. Again, there may be other variables not measured in this study. Troy (2000) postulated that the most important determinant of couple satisfaction is communication skills. Similarly, Margolin's work in 1981 (as cited in Assh & Byers, 1990) suggested that communication exchange between couples across all life cycle stages significantly predicted relationship satisfaction. Another study conducted on college-age dating couples discovered that self-disclosure was a key element in relationship satisfaction (Franzoi, Davis, & Young, 1985 as cited in Davis & Oathout, 1987). All these studies highlight the importance of communication and self-disclosure in mediating couple's satisfaction. Thus future studies may consider examining how these factors may induce couple satisfaction.

7. Recommendations for future study

There are many ways to improve this study for future research. A wider sample area would be needed to improve the external validity of the study. Research could be expanded to both urban and rural area so as to be more representative of couples in our country. Additionally, items in the questionnaire can be revised to be more sensitive to cultural differences. For instance, couples in Malaysia may not value physical affection such as kissing daily as a mean of relationship satisfaction.

It is recommended that future studies may opt to explore other variables that underlie satisfaction and consensus in couples such as communication skills (Troy, 2000) and self-disclosure (Franzoi, Davis, & Young, 1985 as

cited in Davis & Oathout, 1987). Studies in the future may also choose to study the length of romantic involvement instead of the stage of a relationship as it has been noted to be a stronger predictor of satisfaction and consensus in relationships (Assh & Byers, 1990). In support of this view, Margolin, Talovic and Weinstein's work in 1983 (as cited in Assh & Byers, 1990) argued that spouses perceived more negative behavioural attributes in their partners as the length of marriage increased.

Furthermore, perhaps significant findings may be apparent if studies are done on distressed and non-distressed couples as compared to couples in a normal state. Previous studies showed that distressed couples were more likely to exchange higher rates of displeasing behaviours compared to their non-distress counterparts (Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Jacobson, Waldron, & Moore, 1980; Margolin, 1981 as cited in Assh & Byers, 1990)

8. Implications

Despite most of the findings being insignificant, there are several implications to be discussed. Although Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale has been proven to possess excellent psychometric properties, these scores may be affected slightly when assessed in different cultural settings. The scale was originally developed by combining items from various marital adjustment scales where most of them are developed based on American norms. Therefore, results in this study should be interpreted with caution. Hence, it is important to determine if a scale developed in another cultural context is applicable in different cultures. Next, it is essential to highlight that cultural factors may have played a role in this study. According to our results, there's no significant difference between married and dating couples in regards to consensus in a relationship. This runs in contrast with existing Western studies.

However, the practice of collectivistic culture in our country may have influenced participants with shared beliefs and values. The participants have rated both variables similarly regardless of their gender or relationship stage. Therefore, it is unwise to blindly imply that there is no significant difference between males and females, married and dating couples when it comes to relationship issues based on our current findings. Other underlying factors have to be examined before a conclusion can be drawn. In short, this implies that cultural factors have to be taken into consideration when interpreting results of cross-cultural group comparisons.

9. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that married and dating couples differ in regards to couple satisfaction. Furthermore, results indicated that there's no significant difference between male and female in terms of dyadic satisfaction and dyadic consensus. Although there's a stark contrast between our findings and existing studies done in Western cultures, it should be noted that findings in this study may be attributed to collectivistic culture practices such as Malaysia.

In this study, individuals have a high tendency to share the same beliefs and values and thus may have rated the variables similarly regardless of their gender or relationship status. An important implication of this study would be to interpret findings of cross-cultural studies by carefully examining possible influential cultural factors. Further research in the future could be done to examine the underlying factors that may have affected couple satisfaction and consensus. This provides researchers insights into factors that could predict differences between genders, married and dating couples in regards to relationship satisfaction and consensus.

References

- Assh, S. D., & Byers, E. S. (1990). Effects of behavioural exchanges and cognitions on the relationship satisfaction of dating and married persons. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 22(3), 223-235. doi:10.1037/h0078921, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0078921>
- Davis, M. H., & Oathout, H. A. (1987). Maintenance of satisfaction in romantic relationships: Empathy and relational competence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(2), 397-410. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.53.2.397, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.2.397>
- Fiese, B. H., & Tomcho, T. J. (2001). Finding meaning in religious practices: The relation between religious holiday rituals and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15, 597-609. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.15.4.597, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.15.4.597>
- Floyd, F. J., & Wasner, G. H. (1994). Social exchange, equity, and commitment: Structural equation modeling of dating relationships. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 8(1), 55-73. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.8.1.55, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.8.1.55>

Furman, W., & Simon, V. A. (2006). Actor and partner effects of adolescents' romantic working models and styles on interaction with romantic partners. *Child Development*, 3, 588-604. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00892.x, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00892.x>

Gonzaga, G. C., Campos, B., & Bradbury, T. (2007). Similarity, convergence, and relationship satisfaction in dating and married couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(1), 34-48. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.34, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.34>

Gottman, J. M. (1993). A theory of marital dissolution and stability. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 7, 57-75. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.7.1.57, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.7.1.57>

Halford, W. K., & Markman, H. J. (1997). *Clinical handbook of marriage and couples intervention*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1995). The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, method, and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 3-34. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.118.1.3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.118.1.3>

Kurdek, L. A. (1992). Dimensionality of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Evidence from heterosexual and homosexual couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 6(1), 22-35. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.6.1.22, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.6.1.22>

MacLean, A. P., & Peters, R.D. (1995). Graduate student couples: Dyadic satisfaction in relation to type of partnership and demographic characteristics. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 27(1), 120-124. doi:10.1037/0008-400X.27.1.120, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0008-400X.27.1.120>

Malaysian Islam Development Department. (JAKIM, 2008). Statistical Figure on Divorce and Causes of Divorce in Malaysia.

Margolin, G., Talovic, S., & Weinstein, C. (1983). Areas of change questionnaire: A practical approach to marital assessment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51, 920-931. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.51.6.920, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.51.6.920>

Miller, D. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2002). *Handbook of research design and social measurement* (p. 546). (6th ed.). CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 38(1), 15-28. doi:10.2307/350547, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/350547>

Troy, A. B. (2000). Determining the factors of intimate relationship satisfaction: Interpersonal communication, sexual communication, and communication affect. *Colgate University Journal of the Sciences*, 221-230.

Table 1. Mean Dyadic Consensus and Dyadic Satisfaction Scores for Married and Dating Couples in a Relationship

Variables	Mean Scores		
	Married Couples	Dating Couples	t (138)
Dyadic Consensus	31.36	31.14	-0.139
Dyadic Satisfaction	42.49	44.00	-1.812**

p>.05

p<.01**

Table 2. Mean Dyadic Consensus and Dyadic Satisfaction Scores for Males and Females in a Relationship

Variables	Mean Scores		
	Males	Females	t (138)
Dyadic Consensus	31.83	30.68	.713
Dyadic Satisfaction	43.40	43.09	.371

p>.05